

Please join me in supporting the "Francis X. McCloskey Post Office Building Designation Act."

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 3379, a bill to designate the Bloomington, Indiana Post Office in honor of the late Congressman Frank McCloskey. Indiana has lost one of its most dedicated and valued public servants. Frank McCloskey's sincerity and compassion for people, not only here in America, but around the world, was profound. My thoughts and prayers are with his family during this time. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3379.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the conference report to accompany H.R. 2559, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAYS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

#### CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2559, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 429, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 2559) making appropriations for military construction, family housing, and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAYS). Pursuant to House Resolution 429, the conference report is considered as having been read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of November 4, 2003, at page H10253.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG).

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present to the House the conference report on H.R. 2559, the fiscal year 2004 military construction appropriations conference report. This legislation provides funds for all types of construction projects on military installations here in the United States and abroad. These projects include family housing, barracks, training ranges, runways, aircraft hangars and fitness facilities.

I would in particular like to thank my ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), for all the great work that he has worked with me on, all the great activity. I also wanted to thank all members of the committee. Let me thank, in addition, the committee staff, including, and I am going to run down the list, Valerie Baldwin, Brian Potts, Kim Reath, Mary Arnold, Tom Forhan, John Conger, Jeff Onizuk and Lieutenant Commander Scott Gray for their support in producing this report. I would also like to sincerely thank Chairman YOUNG and the chief clerk Jim Dyer for their assistance in bringing this negotiation with the other body to a close. Further, I would like to acknowledge the advice and counsel provided by the House Committee on Armed Services. The bill is the culmination of a joint effort with subcommittee chairman HEFLEY and full committee chairman HUNTER.

The conference report today totals some \$9.316 billion which complies with the 302(b) allocation for budget authority and outlays. This recommendation is \$199 million more than the President's request. These additional funds address critical infrastructure and quality-of-life requirements above and beyond that request. Excluding funds provided for the global war on terrorism and the Iraq/Afghanistan supplementals, the conference report is nearly \$1.4 billion, or nearly 13 percent below fiscal year 2003 enacted levels. This year there were significant differences between the House's military construction bill and that of the other body. While we sought to preserve funding for military construction in Europe and Korea and to support the quality of life and operational readiness of our forces abroad, the other body chose to significantly reduce overseas funding to support projects here in the United States.

I am pleased to inform my colleagues that this conference report strikes a balance between both these ap-

proaches. We preserve the most critical overseas requirements for the services, but brought the balance of the funding for other overseas projects back to the United States to fund critical infrastructure here. While the House aggressively supported the President's request and the priorities of the combatant commanders in this conference report, we share the concern of the other body about funding overseas projects in light of the ongoing review of our overseas footprint. The review currently being conducted by the Department of Defense will determine our long-term overseas basing strategy and will thus help us set funding requirements to support our forces abroad. It will be absolutely essential for both military construction subcommittees to have the completed plan prior to moving forward with the military construction appropriation for fiscal year 2005. We look forward to receiving this plan in the very near future.

Though this conference report is below the fiscal year 2003 enacted levels, we are fully supporting the military's mission critical infrastructure needs and quality-of-life initiatives. We are able to do so in large part because we are getting far more "bang for the buck" through innovative programs such as the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, barracks privatization and utilities privatization. These programs are enabling the services to rapidly replace family housing and infrastructure at a cost that is dramatically lower than what we could ever have afforded through traditional military construction appropriations. Our motto is to let the military do what they do best, which is defending America.

In short, we are doing it smarter, not harder, and the beneficiaries are single soldiers, military families, men and women serving our country around the world and the U.S. taxpayers. We have and will continue to support sweeping quality of life improvements for those in the military.

This conference report was forged through the compromise of both bodies of this Congress. This report directly supports the men and women in uniform, fully funds projects vital to our national security, provides critical infrastructure support to ongoing operations worldwide, and fully funds our efforts to improve the quality of life of our military personnel and their families. It is a fair report. I encourage my colleagues to support it.